1. **Course Description:**

A study of church growth and renewal dynamics from a biblical, theological, historical, and cultural perspective. Topics include church growth and renewal principles, typologies, and methodologies, with attention to the roles of prayer worship, preaching, teaching, fellowship, and evangelism in church growth and renewal. (4 semester hours)

2. **Co-requisite Course:**

This course is a co-requisite with DM 7076 Applied Ministry Experience in Church Growth and Revitalization.

3. **Course Objectives:**

The student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- Discuss the history of the church growth movement and its impact on the modern day church.
- Analyze and discuss the spiritual components of church revitalization and church growth, such as prayer and worship.
- Appraise various techniques for mobilizing and organizing a church for effective evangelism.
- Identify the components for establishing an effective process of assimilation.
- Analyze and design a plan for an effective discipling program in the local church.
- Understand the various mechanical and structural barriers that can impede natural church growth.
- Demonstrate effective communication skills required in ministry today.
4. Course Texts

Required Texts: All students must read the required books.


Additional Reading: Students should complete a total of 2,000 pages of reading, including the three required tests, by the beginning of the seminar. This total should include texts from each of the following categories.

Read at Least **One** of the Following: Historical


Read at Least **Two** of the Following: Spiritual


**Read at Least Two of the Following: Revitalization**


**Read at Least One of the Following: Evangelism**


Read At Least One of the Following: Assimilation


Read At Least One of the Following: Discipleship/Teaching


Read At Least One of the Following: Miscellaneous


*Books with an asterisk cannot be used for the Book Critique

5. Course Requirements:

Pre-Seminar Assignments:

1. Write a five page essay on Thom Rainer’s The Book of Church Growth: History, Theology and Principles. You must demonstrate that you understand the history, the theology, and the principles of the modern church growth movement. Site specific references from your reading with appropriate footnotes.

2. Select one of the books from the additional reading list and write a five page critique following “Guidelines for a Book Critique” under “Content” on Blackboard. Contact
Dr. McDonald (larry.mcdonald@ngu.edu) with your top three choices. Only one student may review a book. You will be notified as to which book you may review from your list of three.

3. Prepare a twenty page paper on one of the topics listed below. Follow the NGU guidelines for writing. Each student should be prepared to make a 20 minute presentation including a one page handout outlining the main ideas of the presentation. Contact Dr. McDonald (larry.mcdonald@ngu.edu) to give him your top three choices. He will notify you which topic has been assigned to you.

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the church growth movement? Describe these both practically and theologically.
- What are the factors that can cause a church to stagnate and decline? This should include physical, programmatic, and spiritual factors.
- What factors effect church revitalization? What are the stages and steps to leading a church to embark on a revitalization process? This paper relates to preparing a church to begin and not the process itself.
- What is church revitalization? What steps must be taken to lead a church through the revitalization process?
- What is the role of preaching in church growth or revitalization? Identify the biblical basis for your position.
- What is role of prayer and worship in church growth or revitalization? Identify the biblical basis for your position.
- How does one build an evangelism strategy for the local church? What is necessary for an effective evangelism strategy? How does one motivate, mobilize, and train laity to share their faith?
- What are the issues that cause people to drop out of church? Why do many churches have such a wide back door?
- What are the keys to keeping people connected and engaged? How can a church shut the back door?
- What is the role of Sunday school/small groups in church growth? Can the traditional Sunday school still be effective in contemporary culture? How does one organize and create new classes?
- How does one improve the teaching ministry in the local church? How does one enlist and train teachers for small groups? What are the dynamics involved in leading a good small group?
When one speaks of discipleship, what does it mean? The great commission commands one to make disciples. How does one know when he has succeeded? What does a disciple look like and do?

Strategy for an effective discipling strategy for the local church. What is involved in the discipleship process?

How does one develop a missional mindset in the church? How does one turn his church from an inward to an outward focus? Once established, how does one maintain a missional focus?

How does one implement strategies for an Acts 1:8 missional strategy? How does one involve his church in implementing missions in all four quadrants of Acts 1:8?

What is the role of leadership in church growth? What is the role of the pastor and staff in motivating and equipping a church to experience growth?

Many churches stagnate and decline because of a lack of lay leadership. How does one enlist and develop growth minded leaders?

The homogeneous principle has long been seen as a key to evangelism and church growth. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the homogeneous principle? How does one incorporate the strengths and avoid the weaknesses?

The multi-site church has become one method of avoiding the issues raised by land and building constraints. What are its strengths and weaknesses? How would one lead a church to adopt a multi-site approach?

There are a group of churches that are often referred to a “contemporary churches.” Which contemporary models appear to provide the greatest hope for the future? Why? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the contemporary models of church growth?

What options are there for organizing small groups? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches to organization?

Be prepared to participate in-class discussion and be ready to make your presentation following the schedule provided in “Course Content” on blackboard.

Assignment Due Dates:

All assignments (except for the final exam) are due the week of the intensive seminar. During the seminar, submission instructions for Blackboard will be given.
4. **Grading**

   Essay on History, Theology, and Principles of Church Growth 200
   
   Book Critique 200
   
   Research Paper and Presentation 400
   
   Final Exam 200
   
   **Total Points** 1000

**Grade Scale**

Grading Scale for this Course:

- 91 to 100 A
- 81 to 90 B
- 71 to 80 C
- 61 to 70 D
- 60 or Below F

6. **Classroom Etiquette**

   Cell phones, smart phones, and other e-mail devices should be turned off during class. Students are not to take calls during class or leave class to take a call. Calls should be taken and returned during breaks.

   When wireless internet access is available, students should not use their computers to surf the internet or check email during class. Internet searches should only be conducted as part of the class discussion or process.

   Business casual is the appropriate dress for class.